

## LAND CONVERSION FILES IN STAGNANT MODE

Applying for land conversion? Be prepared for a long haul

ROOPLA LALL

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ At a time when various State governments have been taking measures to make the land conversion process easier and simple, the Revenue Department of the UT administration has been drawing flak for inordinate delays in starting the land conversion process. As per sources, land conversion process has been completely halted in the islands for almost two & a half years and scores of applications are piled up in the department, gathering dust & cobwebs.

Over 1400 applications seeking conversion of land are pending with the Revenue department. Applicants have been approaching the department on a daily basis pleading for starting the process. But every time they are told "No land conversion as of now". Due to halting of the land conversion process, land conversion applications are piling-up high in the

*The process of land conversion has been held-up for the past two & half years. As per sources over 1400 applications for conversion of land are pending with the Revenue dept as on date*



Revenue department. Finding no suitable response from the department, many applicants have even approached the Court seeking directions to the Revenue department to start the land conversion process so that applicants who have applied for land conversion can take up their projects on the land. Meanwhile, sources told EOI that the Revenue department is working on a new land conversion policy undertaking major reforms which will not only ensure speedy approvals to put the plots for non-agriculture use, but will also fetch more revenue to the department. Sanjan, a real estate agent said that once the revenue department is able to frame the new land conversion policy and implement the same, it could give a boost to the real estate sector and help people trying to get the agricultural land converted to residential or commercial purposes. While framing the policy, the Revenue department should keep the land conversion process simple and reduce the time taken, he said.

Local contractors deployed to proceed with filling of major potholes, attending to bad road stretches: NHIDCL

ASHIM

RANGAT, NOV 23/--/ Responding to a letter by the Pradhan, GP Bakultala informing about the proposed protest over the abysmal condition of NH-4 roads from Bakultala junction to DFO Bungalow Culvert Rangat, the National Highways Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL) has clarified that the stretch from Baratang to Rangat is Package-III which has been assigned to a contractor, Company named M/s Mantana Vashistha.

(Contd. on page-6)



Yuvajaya Foundation to conduct Career Connect at Junglighat

Australian High Commissioner to present his opening remarks

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ Yuvajaya Foundation, a non-profit organization will be conducting a career connect programme for empowering first-generation young graduates from BPL families to start meaningful careers and break the cycle of poverty for them and their families. As per the programme schedule, the inaugural event will be held at 5.00 pm on November 24th

2022, at Junglighat. The Australian High Commissioner, Hon'ble Barry O' Farrell will present his opening remarks highlighting strategic importance of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Australia's interest in the area. An overview of VIBHA and its works in India will also be presented. Mr. John Robert Babu, Community leader will speak about the scenario in A&N Islands and its relevance to the project. Mr. Venkesh YUVAJAYA will talk about direct aid programme and its immediate and direct impact on the beneficiary. Miss Maryama Scotlin, VIBHA, will brief about the event to the members of the High Commission and other members, including the beneficiary. Under this programme about 30 graduates of the islands will be provided full-time 10-weeks online training that can be attended using a mobile which is available for graduates of 2022, 2021 and 2020. There will be placement drives for 15 days at Bangalore with accommodation and handholding. Any first-generation graduate is eligible to avail the free of cost training. The Career connect programme has helped more than 200+ rural graduates to start their corporate careers in the last year. The trainees were placed in companies like Accenture, JPMorgan, Infosys, TCS, Wipro, Northern Trust, Omega Health, HGS, VisionNet, Allsecet with CTC of 2.0 lakh to 3.0 lakh per annum. More details at www.yuvajaya.org.

(Contd. on page-6)

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# SC asks Centre to produce file related to appointment of election commissioner Arun Goel

NEW DELHI, NOV 23 /--/ The Supreme Court asked the Centre on Wednesday to produce before it the file related to the appointment of Election Commissioner Arun Goel, who was appointed on November 19. A five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice K M Joseph said it wants to know whether there was any "hanky panky" in Goel's appointment as election commissioner as he was only recently given voluntary retirement from service. The bench rejected the objections of Attorney General (AG) R Venkataramani on the court willing to see the file related to Goel's appointment while the hearing is on. Venkataramani told the bench, also comprising justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and C T Ravikumar, that it is dealing with the larger issue of appointment of ECs and the chief election commissioner (CEC) and it cannot look at an individual case flagged by advocate Prashant Bhushan. "I take serious objection to this and have my reservation to the

court seeing the file amidst the hearing of a pleas seeking a collegium-



Arun Goel

Constitution bench," he like system for the said. The bench said it appointment of ECs and the

CEC last Thursday and Goel was appointed as an EC subsequently on November 19. Therefore, it wants to see what prompted the step. "We want to see what the mechanism is. We will not treat it as an adversarial and keep it for our record, but we want to know as you claim that everything is hunky dory. Since we were hearing the matter and appointment was made amidst, this may be interlinked. You have time till tomorrow. Produce the documents," it told the AG. At the outset, Bhushan, who appeared on behalf of

petitioner Anoop Baranwal and made his rejoinder submission, said after the court started hearing the mater, the government hurriedly appointed an election commissioner. "This election commissioner was, till Thursday, working as a secretary-level officer in the government. Suddenly, he was given VRS on Friday and appointed as an election commissioner," Bhushan said. Justice Joseph said as far he recalls, it takes three months for a person to get a voluntary retirement. (PTI)

## Corruption-accused minister enjoying 5-star luxury in jail: Anurag Thakur's dig at 'Kejriwal model'

JAIPUR, NOV 23 /--/ Union minister Anurag Thakur on Wednesday referred to a purported leaked video that showed Delhi minister Satyendar Jain having a meal inside his jail cell to launch an attack on the AAP, saying a minister facing corruption charges was enjoying "five-star luxuries" in prison. Fresh videos of Jain emerged on Wednesday in which he is seen eating uncooked vegetables and fruits in his Tihar Jail cell, with Union minister Meenakshi Lekhi alleging he was enjoying facilities



Anurag Thakur

akin to a holiday resort. Jain's advocate has, however, claimed that the video was doctored. "The Health minister of AAP in Delhi has been in jail for the past six months and is enjoying entertainment and massage. How luxuries are enjoyed in jail and how entertainment and massage are done, AAP is a live example of it. "They tell lies. They talk about problems related to prison food but get food plates better than (those available in) five-star hotels in jail. They get mineral water and massages there," Thakur told reporters here. The Union Information and Broadcasting minister said this was the model of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal where five-star facilities were provided in jail. "Arvind Kejriwal gives a certificate of honesty to such people who are in jail for the past six months. This is Kejriwal's model," Thakur said. The BJP leader also said the people of Gujarat would not accept the AAP, whose ministers in Punjab and Delhi were facing corruption charges. He said the AAP had made big claims ahead of Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand but ended up forfeiting their security deposit. "On all the Assembly seats, the security (deposits) of AAP candidates was forfeited in Uttar Pradesh. They could not get even one seat in Uttarakhand. The Health minister in the Punjab government had to resign on corruption charges. The Education minister in Delhi is facing charges in a liquor scam. The people of Gujarat will not accept them," Thakur said. He also targeted the Congress government in Rajasthan, alleging the law-and-order situation deteriorated under Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot. "Every day, some news or other comes from Rajasthan -- be it about crimes against women or atrocities against Dalits. Law-and-order situation has deteriorated. Just think about the image of Rajasthan that is being created," he said. (PTI)

## NIA set to formally take over Mangaluru blast case

MANGALURU, NOV 23 /-/- The Mangaluru autorickshaw blast case would be formally handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) soon, Karnataka DGP Praveen Sood said on Wednesday. He said the objective of the prime accused Mohammed Shariq was to create a divide between communities. "What else was the objective? His aim was to create differences between two communities, there is no doubt. Differences between communities be it Hindu, Muslim, or Christian grow when there is a blast. It means destabilising the country. He definitely intended to disturb communal harmony and unity..." the DGP said. Karnataka Home Minister Araga Jnanendra visited the blast site near here, along with Sood, and also the hospital where Shariq and auto-driver Purushottam Poojary were being treated. Jnanendra said Shariq had visited different places like Coimbatore and Kanyakumari and an investigation has been on. Several police teams have been formed and been sent to different places as part of the probe. Sood said the NIA and other central agencies have been working with the Karnataka police from day-

one of the blast, adding that the case would be formally handed over to NIA. With demand growing for an NIA office in Mangaluru, Jnanendra said the State government has brought this to the notice of the Centre, and expressed confidence there would be set an office in this coastal town. The Minister said the police were working to find the background of the accused in the November 19 blast at Nagori here, his financiers, and, "the forces which are compelling him to repeatedly do such acts." Jnanendra said Shariq had planned a major blast, but "the bomb exploded midway and did not go off the way it was planned". "If the entire cooker (carried by Shariq in the autorickshaw) had exploded then it would have led to major damage. He (Shariq) had managed to create a bomb using materials available locally," said the Home Minister. He said the Home Department has resolved to "completely eradicate the fanatical forces which want bloodbath and kill people and try to disturb the unity and integrity of the country". "Our department has not taken this case lightly. An indepth study and inquiry will take place. We will expose the forces behind the case," the Minister vowed. Jnanendra

said Shariq was travelling as a Hindu and carrying a Hindu photo identity card with him, "So that no one could suspect him". Further, he used to frequently change his address and that it became difficult to trace him. The Minister said Shariq was arrested in an objectionable graffiti case in Mangaluru showing his support to the Islamic State and the Lashkar-e-Toiba, but the High Court granted him bail after he spent seven to eight months in jail. After coming out, he worked in a shop at Thirthahalli in Shivamogga district. He was under watch till then, but he disappeared all of a sudden, Jnanendra said. According to him, those involved in this case used different modes of communication. Sood requested the media to not portray people brought for interrogation as accused. Citing the example of Prem Raj, whose Aadhaar card Shariq had used, Sood said he has an important role in the investigation, as he is the main witness. Also, the police would call Mohan Kumar who had rented his house in Mysuru to Shariq and also question some people from Coimbatore. "We are calling them for their help, not to arrest them. You are showing them as accused. Please don't," said the DGP said. (PTI)

## Decades-old Karnataka, Maharashtra boundary dispute flares up again

BELAGAVI, NOV 23 /--/ The decades-old boundary dispute between Karnataka and Maharashtra over Belagavi has again flared up as both the State governments are readying for a legal battle. On Monday, the Eknath Shinde government in Maharashtra appointed two Ministers to coordinate with the legal team regarding the court case on the dispute that is set to come up in the Supreme Court. Karnataka chief minister Basavaraj Bommai said the State, too, deployed a battery of lawyers, including Mukul Rohatgi and Shyam Diwan, to fight its case. The dispute dates back to the 1960s after the reorganisation of States on linguistic lines. Maharashtra laid claim on Belagavi, earlier known as Belgaum, which was part of the Bombay Presidency at the time of independence, on linguistic grounds. Belagavi bordering Maharashtra has a significant population of Marathi-speaking people, and has for decades been a bone of contention between the two States. Karnataka repeatedly maintained that the Mahajan Commission report on the border issue is final, and, "there is no question of letting go even an inch of Karnataka's border". Bommai reiterated this week that there is no example to show that what had been done under the States Reorganisation Act. "The border dispute is a political tool used by all parties in Maharashtra. But they will never succeed," he had said, adding that Maharashtra's plea has not found maintainability in all these years and the State is prepared to argue that it is not maintainable. Shinde said earlier this week: "Late Balasaheb Thackeray was always a supporter of the State's demand to make Belgaum a part of Maharashtra. We have concentrated our focus on solving the issue. If required, the number of lawyers will be increased". Karnataka has sought to make Belagavi a second power centre after Bengaluru. The government constructed the 'Suvarna Vidhana Soudha' in this town bordering Maharashtra and held winter sessions of the State Legislature there from 2012. The Maharashtra Ekikaran Samiti (MES) and pro-Marathi groups have for decades been fighting for inclusion of Belagavi and Marathi-speaking villages of the region with the western State. (PTI)

## Congress model means casteism and vote bank politics which creates rift among people: Modi

MEHSANA, NOV 23 /--/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the "Congress model" meant casteism, division, and vote bank politics which has "ruined" Gujarat and the entire country. Canvassing for BJP candidates at Mehsana in poll-bound Gujarat, Modi said the Bharatiya Janata Party never endorsed the policy of "favouritism and discrimination" which is evident in youths reposing faith in the ruling party. "Congress model means corruption, nepotism, dynastic politics, sectarianism and casteism. They are known for indulging in vote bank politics and creating rifts between people of different castes or even in different districts to be in power. "This model has ruined not just Gujarat but also India. This is the reason why we have to try hard today to take the country ahead. We (BJP) have never endorsed such a policy of favouritism and discrimination. That is the reason youths are reposing their trust in us," the prime minister said. Earlier in the day, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi targeted the ruling party after 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' led by him entered Madhya Pradesh and alleged the BJP "first spreads fear in the minds of youth, farmers, and labourers and when it sets in, they convert it into violence". Polling for 182 Assembly seats in Gujarat will be held in two phases on December 1 and 5. The counting of votes will be taken up on December 8. The north Gujarat region will vote during the second phase. "They (Congress) always wanted to keep people poor so they remain dependent on government," the prime minister said while addressing a rally in the north Gujarat town. He said youngsters are confident that BJP's policies will create more opportunities for them in the future. The PM said youths in the age group of 20 to 25 years may not even know the kind of hardships faced by the people of Mehsana district in the past including acute shortage of water and electricity. "Droughts were also common in those days. We (BJP) had put Gujarat on the path of prosperity amid natural calamities and using limited resources. In the past, water and electricity used to be the major issues during polls. Today, the opposition can't speak on these issues because such issues are resolved by us," said Modi, who had served as the chief minister of Gujarat before assuming the office of the Prime Minister in 2014. The PM recalled several farmers including youngsters had been killed in police firing for demanding electricity connections when Congress was in power. "People have to pay bribes to get electricity connection in the Congress rule. To change the situation, we started reforms in the power sector by laying new transmission lines and setting up transformers. From just 5 lakh agricultural connections two decades back, Gujarat now has 20 lakh such electricity connections," he added. The prime minister also said the solar power generation in Gujarat has gone up to 8,000 MW while the wind-based power generation has touched the 10,000-megawatt mark. The prime minister is also scheduled to address poll rallies at Dahod, Vadodara, and Bhavnagar during the day. (PTI)

## Bharat Jodo Yatra will be successful in Rajasthan: Sachin Pilot

JAIPUR, NOV 23 /--/ Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Wednesday distanced himself from a threat by a Gurjar outfit to disrupt the Bharat Jodo Yatra if its demand to make him the Rajasthan chief minister is not accepted, and instead accused the BJP of trying to create "disturbances". Gurjar Arakshan Sangharh Samiti leader Vijay Singh Bainsla has threatened to oppose Rahul Gandhi's yatra in the state unless his demands, including making Pilot, a prominent face from the community, the chief minister are accepted. Bainsla has also accused the Congress government of not fulfilling the promises made to the community. "No matter how hard the BJP tries, the yatra will be successful," Pilot said when asked about Bainsla's threat. "The BJP may try to create disturbances...but it is 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' and it will be successful. We will all welcome the yatra with unity," he said outside the party's war room where a meeting has been convened to review preparations for the foot march. On Bainsla's remarks that the community had voted for the Congress believing that a Gurjar leader will be made the chief minister, Pilot said the Congress was reduced to 21 seats in the 2013 assembly elections, but the people gave it a mandate in the 2018 elections. The former deputy chief minister said he was confident that the yatra will be "historic" and that the people are excited. "People from all communities want the yatra to come to the state. From here, it will be a new beginning for the Congress for elections and for the people of the state," he said. The Congress leader, who attended the meeting at the war room briefly, said the yatra is expected to enter Rajasthan between December 3 to 6, but the exact date will be fixed later. "The yatra will be taken out for 15-18 days and will culminate with a rally in Alwar. It will be a big rally in view of the assembly elections next year and will give a positive message," he added. The Gurjar community constitutes five to six per cent of the state's population and is influential in over 40 seats, mainly in eastern Rajasthan. This region includes the districts from where the yatra is scheduled to pass. Infighting between Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and Pilot over the post of chief ministers has been going on for long, an issue which has triggered two political crises in four years of the Congress government. (PTI)



Sachin Pilot

## Significant increase in Yamuna pollution since 2017, finds Delhi govt report

NEW DELHI, NOV 23 /--/ As the Delhi government has promised to clean the Yamuna to bathing standards by 2025, the pollution load in the river has increased substantially over the last five years, according to a report by the environment department. The report shows that barring Palla, the annual average level of biological oxygen demand (BOD) increased at every location of water sample collection for testing in the national capital. BOD, an important parameter for assessing water quality, is the amount of oxygen required by aerobic microorganisms to decompose organic material present in a water body. BOD

levels less than 3 milligram per litre (mg/l) is considered good. There was no immediate reaction available from the environment department. The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) collects river water samples at Palla, where the Yamuna enters Delhi; Wazirabad, ISBT bridge, ITO bridge, Nizamuddin bridge, Agra Canal at Okhla Barrage, Okhla Barrage and Asgarpur. The DPCC data showed while there has been no major change in the annual average BOD level at Palla over the last five years (from 2017 to 2022), it has increased from around 3 mg/l to around 9 mg/l at Wazirabad.

The BOD level has risen from around 30 mg/l to 50 mg/l at the ISBT bridge and from 22 mg/l to 55 mg/l at the ITO bridge during the period. Similarly, the BOD level worsened from 23 mg/l to around 60 mg/l at Nizamuddin bridge, from 26 mg/l to 63 mg/l at Agra Canal at Okhla Barrage, from 26 mg/l to 69 mg/l at Okhla Barrage and from around 30 mg/l to 73 mg/l at Asgarpur, the data showed. The Yamuna river can be considered fit for bathing if BOD is less than 3 milligram per litre and dissolved oxygen (DO) is greater than 5 milligram per litre. Dissolved oxygen (DO) is the amount of oxygen available to living

aquatic organisms. Aquatic life is put under stress if DO levels in the water drop below 5 mg/l. Twenty-two drains carrying domestic wastewater and industrial effluent fall into the Yamuna between Wazirabad and Okhla. Though the 22-km stretch is less than two per cent of the river length, it accounts for about 80 per cent of the pollution in the river. Though a minimum environmental flow is required to clean the river to bathing standards, treating all the domestic wastewater and industrial effluent and further cleaning it using in-situ techniques can help reduce pollutant load significantly, according to

eminent environmentalist Manoj Mishra. In-situ bioremediation techniques involve treatment at the site using aquatic plants or microbial remediation methods. Such systems take less time to become operational, are easy to operate, and require less energy as compared to conventional treatment technologies. Some common in-situ treatment systems are microbial bioremediation, phyto remediation, constructed wetland system and root zone treatment. Adequate space and appropriate flow are general requirements for adoption of these technologies. (PTI)



# National seminar on 'Rights of Differently Abled Women in ANI' in JNRM

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ The Department of Home Science, JNRM, in association with the National Commission for Women, Govt. of India organised a National Seminar on "Rights of Differently Abled Women in Andaman and Nicobar Islands" on 23rd November 2022. During the inauguration, the chief guest SmtSmtitha R, Secretary (Social Welfare), Andaman & Nicobar Administration congratulated the Department of Home Science for organising this programme which is the need of the hour. The women in the society are marginalized and the government is taking all possible steps to bring them into the mainstream. The Social Welfare Department is organising various schemes for the Differently Abled in general and women in particular. She has encouraged the participants to make use of the benefits available for their welfare. Further she has highlighted the Accessible India Campaign through which the Government as well as public places are being made accessible for the person with special needs. Dr.K.S.Pushpa, Professor & Head, Department of Home Science, Gandhigram Institute, Gandhigram spoke on the difficulties being faced by Differently Abled Women in their family as well in society. They also have the rights to lead a life with dignity on par with others for which this seminar will certainly pave the way. Countries like Germany are providing equal opportunity for the Differently Abled Persons. Dr K S Pushpa has suggested establishing a State / UT level Resource Centre for the Differently Abled Women in the Department of Home Science, JNRM in collaboration with the Directorate of Social Welfare. Dr. S. Kavitha Maithily, Associate Professor, Department of Home Science, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram spoke about the need of having inclusive societies for the holistic development of the Differently Abled Women. Among differently abled

women are again marginalised and through this seminar their voices will be heard as they come

Women, Dr. S. Kavitha Maithily, Associate Professor, Department of Home Science, Gandhigram

of Grassroot Level Workers for bringing the DAW into mainstream. Shri. Saurabh Dudi, Assistant Professor of Law, Andaman Law College spoke on Legal Framework to Safeguard and protect the Differently Abled Women in India, Dr.K.Venkatesan, Assistant Professor & Head spoke on Schemes and Programmes for the Differently Abled Women for their Right Based Empowerment. Earlier Smt. Nidhi Shekhawat, Assistant Professor welcomed the gathering while Dr Rekha Kumari, Resource Person, Department of Home Science proposed vote of thanks. Smt. Poonam Ajay Singh, Resource Person, Department of Home Science moderated the entire programme and Ms. PBhuvaneshwari, Resource Person and Ms.VarshaLakra has served as Rapporteur. Altogether 300 Differently Abled Women participants from various SHGs, Anganwadi Workers, Grassroot level functionaries, field workers and students participated in this programme



to know their rights. As the country marching towards Sustainable Development Goals, she added.

Dr. H. K. Sharma, Principal, JNRM spoke on the relevance of the programme in today's scenario. He has also emphasised the vision for uniting the people to work for the development of Differently Abled Women in the Society. Under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA) cell of JNRM the Department of Home Science and students are closely working with the Gram Panchayats and villages for the sustainable development of the villages and awareness programmes for the women. Dr. K. Venkatesan, HOD, Homescience and Convener of the programme spoke on the role of NCW in safeguarding the women and their rights and also Differently Abled Women. The field workers are having important role to play to make aware the women about their rights and various Government schemes, he added.

During the technical Session Dr.K.S.Pushpa, Professor & Head, Department of Home Science, Gandhigram presented Barrier for Person with Disabilities: Breaking Down Barriers with special reference to

Rural Institute, Gandhigram presented Community Based Inclusive Development- Roles and Responsibilities

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## MV SwarajDweep sailing for Vizag postponed by a day

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ Due to administrative reasons, the scheduled sailing programme of MV SwarajDweep from Port Blair to Vizag on 25TH November 2022, has been postponed. Now, the vessel will sail for Vizag on 26th November 2022, at 1000 Hrs from Haddo Wharf. Similarly, the vessel will sail for Port Blair on 30th November 2022 at 1600 Hrs from Vizag port instead of 29th November 2022.

## Counselling for admission in TGCE

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ The counselling for admission to Two Years B.Ed. Degree Programme for the session 2022-23 in Tagore Government College of Education, Port Blair which was earlier scheduled on 24th November 2022, has been postponed due to non-receipt of final year result of some PG courses offered by JNRM. Fresh date for the counselling for admission to all the remaining subjects and categories will be published shortly. Candidates who are seeking admission to Two Years B.Ed. Degree Programme in these subjects are requested to submit their results immediately in person for finalization of merit list.

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A Group of 25 IPS Probationers (2021 Batch) of 74 RR from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA), Hyderabad on a study-cum-cultural tour to A&N Islands called on Admiral D K Joshi (Retd.), Lt Governor of Raj Niwas on Wednesday in presence of DGP in-charge of Andaman & Nicobar Police.

### Free Ayurveda health camp at Carnic

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ A team consisting of doctor and para medical staff (Ayurveda) of Regional Ayurveda Research Institute (RARI), a unit of CCRAS under Ministry of AYUSH, Port Blair will be conducting a free Ayurveda Health Camp and Survey at Kinmai and Chuckchucha villages of Car Nicobar from Nov. 23 to Dec. 2.

## MONDAL JEWELLERS

916 BIS HALL MARK GOLD ORNAMENTS

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There's so much pollution in the air now that if it weren't for our lungs there'd be no place to put it all

Robert Orben

## Rozgar Mela, on a mission mode

Lack of employment opportunities is a serious problem in India. The Rozgar Mela (employment fair) is a step towards fulfillment of the commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to give top priority to job generation. At the same time, the government's recent Rozgar Mela initiative, which promises to offer 10 lakh jobs, is an oblique admission of this complex situation. Last month, appointment letters were handed over to 75,000 newly inducted appointees at Rozgar Mela. Appointment letters were given for several posts including Central Armed Police Force, Sub Inspector, Constable, and Income Tax Inspectors, among others. This time, the posts of teachers, lecturers, nurses, nursing officers, doctors, pharmacists, radiographers and other technical and paramedical posts are also being filled up. The Central government can go on a hiring spree as it recently admitted that around 10 lakh posts in various Central government departments were lying vacant. The Rozgar Mela most likely see BJP-ruled states taking part and filling up some vacancies in state departments. When Prime Minister Narendra Modi handed out the appointment letters, he pointed out that similar campaigns have been held in NDA-ruled states and union territories in the past one month. "This is the double benefit of double engine governments. The campaign to hand over appointment letters to the youth shall continue in a sustained manner," was his message, loud and clear. Double engine government has been a campaign issue for the BJP in several assembly elections, including the recently concluded in Himachal and the upcoming polls in Gujarat. Tripura too will go to polls early next year. The prime minister said in the past one month alone union territories and NDA-ruled states have handed out appointment letters to thousands of youth. In the past one month alone, Maharashtra and Gujarat have handed out thousands of appointment letters. A few days back, Uttar Pradesh government too has handed out appointment letters to several youth. Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Chandigarh too have organized Rozgar Melas and handed out jobs to thousands of youth.

The holding of Rozgar Mela showed that the government was working in mission mode to provide jobs to the youngsters of the country. The Prime Minister's Office said the campaign is a step towards fulfilling his commitment to according highest priority to employment generation, and it is expected to be a catalyst in creating more jobs and providing meaningful opportunities to the youth for their empowerment and participation in national development directly. The government has long remained in denial mode on the issue of employment and the quality of jobs. It asserts that start-ups and the gig economy were creating millions of jobs. This claim has been belied by various job surveys—both government and private sector. Start-ups are creating jobs, but many of them have disrupted existing businesses, making several old business establishments redundant. So, a lot of people who were employed elsewhere are joining the now famously known gig economy.

# NPS will be a major election issue during 2024 poll

## REFLEX ACTION

C. Srikumar

Agitation of the central government and state government Employees are going on throughout the country against the no-guarantee National Pension System (NPS) implemented by the BJP-led NDA government during the year 2003. The central government and state government employees are grateful to the Communist Party of India for adopting a resolution against the NPS and demanding restoration of defined, guaranteed and non-contributory old pension scheme in the 24th Congress of the CPI held at Vijayawada from October 14 to 18, 2022.

Recently, during the month of September, more than 3,000 defence civilian employees assembled at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi, and staged an anti-NPS dharna and submitted a memorandum to the government demanding for scrapping the NPS and restoring the old pension scheme. In Kerala the AITUC led state government employees' organizations led a strong 25,000 employees' 'March to Secretariat' demanding withdrawal of NPS and for bringing back the old pension scheme for the state government employees.

The BJP government in 2003 under the pressure and dictates of the World Bank and IMF implemented the contributory NPS with lot of fanfare propagating that the employees would get a huge amount as pension, since the pension contribution of both the employees and the government would be invested in the stock market. Today after 18 years of the implementation of the NPS, the government stands totally exposed. Employees who are retiring after 18 years of service in the NPS is getting a very paltry monthly pension of Rs 2,000 to Rs 4,000 depending upon the value of annuity which they are purchasing from the 40 per cent of the pension fund available in their account. In the old pension scheme the minimum pension itself is Rs 9,000 and every year to compensate the price rise two instalments of dearness relief are being paid to the pensioners. Under the NPS the pension remains static and no provision for compensation of price rise.

The NPS is nothing but a gambling or a lottery. If there is a crash in the stock market, the burden of getting less amount of pension should be shouldered by the poor

pensioner. From various global studies it is revealed that most of the private pension funds were wiped away in the deep economic crisis. The argument put forth by the Vajpayee government in 2003 was that more than 25 per cent of the country's budget is eaten away by the pensioners. But the fact remains that the government gets back a major portion of the pension, either as income tax or through GST which is collected from the pensioners on whatever he or she is purchasing from the market.

Under the Pension's Act 1871 enacted during the British regime, pension is a bounty, given as a matter of grace depending upon the sweet will of the employer. In the year 1971 the Supreme Court has ruled that pension is not a bounty payable on the sweet will and pleasure of the government and that, on the other hand, the right to pension is a valuable right vesting in a government servant. The Supreme Court further held that pension is a property. In another historical judgment delivered on December 17, 1981 by the five member bench of the Supreme Court of India consisting of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, Justice V D Tulzapurkar, Justice DA Desai, Justice O Chinnappa Reddy and Justice Baharul Islam declared that pension is neither a bounty nor a matter of grace depending upon the sweet will of the employer and that it creates a vested right subject to 1972 Rules which are statutory in character, because they are enacted in exercise of powers conferred by the Proviso to Article 309 and Clause (5) of Article 148 of the Constitution; that Pension is not an ex-gratia payment, but it is a payment for the past service rendered; and it is a social welfare measure rendering socio-economic justice to those who in the heyday of their life ceaselessly toiled for the employer on an assurance that in their old age, they would not be left in the lurch.



Charlotte Namwandi (M), winner of the first-ever Miss Youth Vibe, is pictured with youngsters from an informal settlement in Windhoek, Namibia

Conventional Crossword												
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ACROSS						DOWN					
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4	Spoil					2	Artless				
6	Therefore					3	Staggers				
8	Of sheep					4	Emotional state				
9	Garment					5	Regrets				
11	Lyric poems					7	Cry of pain				
12	Water pitchers					10	Girdle				
15	Insects					13	Have on				
18	Hindu garment					14	Wrecks				
20	Metal					15	144				
21	Abnormally fat					16	Ward off				
22	Serpents					17	Oozes				
23	Hill					18	Fine sediment				
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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1713												
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### DISCLAIMER

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# Future of India starves

## FOCUS

Krishnendu Das

The 17th edition of the Global Hunger Index (GHI) is out this October 2022; the image drawn by the said index is not at all rosy. Globally the progress against Hunger has "stagnated" due to various issues like ongoing conflicts between various countries across the globe notably Russo-Ukraine War, climate change, and the economic fallout post-Covid-19 pandemic.

GHI is jointly released by "Concern Worldwide" (an international humanitarian organization dedicated to tackling poverty in the world's poorest countries) and "Welthungerhilfe" (the largest private aid organization in Germany independent of politics and religion) every October since 2006, and is used as a comprehensive indicator for measuring and tracking Hunger at a global, regional and national level. GHI ranks individual countries on a 100-point scale, where, 0 means No Hunger. GHI scores are based on 04 indicators: Under-nourishment (% of the population whose caloric intake is insufficient); Child Mortality (mortality rate of children under the age of 05 years); Child Wasting (% of children under 05 years, who have low weight for their height); and, Child Stunting (% of children under 05 years, who have low height for their age).

Among the 121 countries that participated in this compound index in this edition, 44 countries are marked for having serious or alarming levels of hunger, India being one of them, which ranks at 107 (plummeted down from last 2021 index where India ranked 101). Such alarming levels of Hunger in Indian Society jeopardize the pledged Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Goal 02: Zero Hunger, to be achieved by 2030. India has a score of 29.1 in the compounded index of GHI, ranking it at 107th which is behind most of the neighboring countries except Afghanistan which is ranked 109th out of

121 countries. According to the latest GHI 2022 data, India has the highest Child Wasting Rate (19.3%) among all countries that are covered by GHI. Though the rate of Child Stunting and Child Mortality has declined, the prevalence of undernourishment has risen from 14.6% in 2018-2020 to 16.3% in 2019-2021; which implies that 224.3 million people in India (out of 828 million globally) undernourished.

Such plummeting ranking of India in GHI has again provided a fertile ground for political mudslinging in this Democratic State of Affairs. In response to the scenario, the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development issued a criticism saying that "consistent effort is yet again visible to taint India's image as a Nation that does not fulfill the food security and nutritional requirement of its population". The Govt. marked that the Index is an erroneous measure of hunger and suffers from serious methodological issues. It further stated that the report is not only disconnected from ground reality but also chooses to deliberately ignore efforts like Eat Right India Movement by FSSAI; POSHAN Abhiyan; Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana; National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013; to ensure food security for its population.

Before we jump into conclusions and align ourselves to any of the views presented by our political representatives, it must be noted here that there may be some methodological issues present in the Global Hunger Index, as it is not only India but there are others, who have raised

concerns about the methodologies used in GHI, especially the sample size (~3,000) used for the calculation of such a comprehensive index, representing a national, regional and international image, which may nullify the Government efforts about securing food security for its population, but what about the data that Government itself has provided regarding nutritional status of the population through its National Family Health Survey (NFHS) 2019-2021. Is it reliable or again the resources (from the pool of diminishing resources of this overpopulated country) used for such a survey has all gone down the drain?

NFHS 2019-21 notes that the rate of Child Stunting (% of children under 05 years, who have low height for their age) in India stands at 35.5% while the rate of Child Wasting (% of children under 05 years, who have low weight for their height) is 19.3%, similar to the figure noted by GHI 2022 and which is ALARMING as it crosses the WHO permissible limit of 15%. Thus, both GHI data at the international level and the national data made available by the Govt. of India, state that India has the highest number of \*wasted\* children across the globe, which makes the future of Indian Society bleak.

The Bleakness of the Indian Future can be drawn from another facet of NFHS 2019/21 data, where Wasted Children in Indian Families are classified based on SocioEconomic Status. It notes that Families belonging to the top 20% have only 23.1% of wasted children, whereas families belonging to the bottom 20% have 46.4% of

wasted children; i.e., the difference between the two extreme sections of the Indian Society in the case of Child Wasting is 100%. Now, it is clear that socioeconomic status is inversely proportional to the rate of Child Wasting. The lower the socio-economic status the higher the chance of a child being wasted. Similar trends have been observed in terms of Stunting, where the average height of a person is directly proportional to his socio-economic status. Thus, the average height of the poor is comparatively less than the average height of the well-off people in society.

Both Child Stunting and Child Wasting, are the developmental Challenges that our Children are facing, due to unequal availability of nutritional food to all sections of Indian Society, indirectly reflecting the socioeconomic divide that persists in Indian Society; and threatens to endanger our future. Nutritional deficiency affects the allround development of a child, who are our future, from acquiring physical strength to having proper mental prowess; which again brings another Government Flagship Programme to question-Integrated Child Development Scheme (I.C.D.S.). If ICDS is continuing for almost half a century, providing seamless accessibility to nutritional food to all strata of Indian Society, focused primarily on Women and Children (upto 06 years of age) then why Indian Children are 'wasted' at such an alarming rate?

Now, will the Govt. take the necessary remedial measures or contradict itself; and will the Opposition be responsible enough to study through the gaps and bring the issue to the fore as the fate of India's future depends on measures that would be taken by us and we all would remain liable to answer our descendants about what choices we had to offer them with their fate, when our future starved! (Author is a West Bengal government employee/Views are his own)



## PM's ROZGAR MELA: Appointment letters handed over to candidates by LG

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ RozgarMela was organized under Mission Recruitment at Port Blair for Andaman



and Nicobar Islands on Tuesday. The appointment letter distribution function by the Prime Minister to newly inducted recruits waslive screened at Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Auditorium, Mohanpura and was attended byAdmiral D K Joshi

(Retd.), Lt. Governor, A&N Islands, alongwith the Chief Secretary, A&N Islands, Mr. Keshav Chandra, Senior Officers from Civil Administration &Defence establishment.

The Lt. Governor and others witnessed the launch of KarmayogiPrarambh module -online orientation course for all new appointees and also listened to the address of the Prime Minister.The Lt. Governor also handed over the physical copies of the appointment letters to the new appointees on the occasion.

MrPrem Kumar of Shadipur, Port Blair got the order of appointment for the post of Constable General Duty in Border Security Force(BSF), Mr. A. Akhil, Mallapuram Kerala and Mr. Mohammed Ubaidullah, Agatti Lakshadweep, both recruited to the post of Pest Control Worker, in Indian Navy, Headquarters of ANC.

## Science, Art & Craft exhibition in RGT Public Vidyalaya



PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ A Science, Art & Craft exhibition was conducted in RGT Public Vidyalaya on 23rd November 2022. The aim of the exhibition was to elaborate on the importance of Science in our life and to bring the classroom teaching into practice with a view to showcase the creative and innovative skills of the children of the school.

SmtT.Mangayarkarasi, Councillor, Ward No-10 (P BMC) inaugurated the exhibition in the presence of the School

Management and parents. Over 150 students participated with various projects models (working /non-working), charts, clay made toys in different subjects like languages like English, Maths, Science and Craft appreciation their efforts made by student under the able guidance of the teachers, SmtT.Mangayarkarasiepathized the need of holding such exhibitions in future too as they National Education Policy NEP 2020 is more focused on developing the scientific and creative skill of students.

## Patnaik announces package for kendu leaf pluckers, demands GST abolition

BHUBANESWAR, NOV 23/--/Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced a special package for the welfare of kendu pluckers and other employees on Wednesday and demanded complete withdrawal of GST on the collection of the leaf.

The package was announced a day after the ruling BJD criticised the BJP-led NDA government at the Centre over imposition of 18 per cent GST on kendu leaf trade.

Patnaik said the special package will benefit around eight lakh pluckers, binders and other seasonal staff associated with the kendu leaf trade.

The chief minister said that the Centre has imposed 18 per cent GST on kendu leaf business. "I had earlier requested the central government to remove it and I am again raising my demand to completely abolish GST from the business".

The package, he said, was announced after three rounds of discussion in the past week over various problems faced by the kendu leaf pluckers.

Kendu leaf is used to wrap bidis and is one of the most important non-wood forest products in the state. It is called the green gold of Odisha.

According to the special package, Rs 1,000 will be given to each kendu leaf plucker and Rs 1,500 to each seasonal staff and binder in the first phase. All kendu leaf pluckers and employees will be covered under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), an official release issued by the chief minister's office said. The package also had provision for stipends for the offsprings of kendu leaf pluckers and other employees. Besides, meritorious students will be awarded at the district level.

The gratuity payment for kendu pluckers of a

circle and leaf binders has been revised from seven days to 15 days. All pluckers will be issued identity cards, Patnaik said.

The kendu leaf pluckers belong to BPL families and Odisha government has always been working for their welfare and for other employees in the sector.

"Odisha is the first state in the country to give bonus to kendu leaf pluckers. This policy has become a model for other states," he said. BJD spokesperson Sasmit Patra attacked BJP on Tuesday accusing it of cheating farmers across the country.

"You(BJP) cheated kendu leaf workers who are men and women mostly from the BPL families. When the GST was at five per cent on kendu leaf they had a decent living. But you (BJP) increased it to 18 per cent and impacted their source of earning. Isn't this cheating?" Patra said. (PTI)

## Union MOS Ashwini Kumar Choubey calls on Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati



AIZAWL, NOV 23/--/ Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Union Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution and Environment, Forest and Climate Change called on Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati at the Raj Bhavan, this evening.

Governor Hari Babu Kambhampati warmly welcomed Shri Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Union Minister of State, and wished him to have fruitful discussions with the state officials on various agenda for the coming two days. Governor quickly briefed

his esteemed guest on the undergoing important infrastructural projects and those to be commenced very shortly. The two exchanged important issues and topics about the developmental initiatives in the state. Governor also raised the issue of Forest

## MLA graced inaugural function of 'Zoram Harh Rawh Campaign' in Kolasib



KOLASIB, NOV 23/--/ A state-wide program to spread awareness and to prevent the spread of HIV/Aids in Mizoram, 'Zoram Harh Rawh Campaign', was held in Kolasib district, jointly organized by DC Office,

Kolasib, District AIDS Prevention & Control Committee and Sub-Headquarters YMA, Kolasib. The function which was carried out at Parish Hall, Venglai, Kolasib was graced by Mr. K. Laldawngliana, MLA,

Vice Chairman, Commerce & Industrial Board.

In today's awareness campaign, presentation on the transmission and prevention of HIV was conducted by Ms. Lalmuanawmi, Mobile Counsellor, ICTC with Dr.

Lalawmpuia Chhange, Chief Medical Officer highlighting on the present scenario of HIV/AIDS prevalence in Kolasib district, pointing out that there is 1.98% positive case detected from 85,096 blood samples collected

through 2002-2022 October. The campaign will consist of song writing competition, cultural dance and singing competition, inviting participants from various YMA branch of Kolasib district. (DIPR)

## Power cuts

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ Power supply will remain suspended at various areas under ChouldariSub-Division viz.

Tiger Feeder: Manglutan to Wandoor, Dhanikhari to Tirur, Ograbraj, Coffee Bagicha, Chouldari, Namunagar, Bengali Basti and TempleMyoon Nov. 24 from 8 am to 3 pm due to shifting of 33/11 KV overhead line in connection with construction of two lane minor bridge at Dhanikhari, a press release from Electricity Department said.

## Firing practice

PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ Firing practice will be carried out by Indian Army from Nov. 28 to 30 from 10 am to 4 pm.

All concerned have been warned to keep themselves and their fishing boats away from the firing range during the above mentioned date & time, a notification issued by DM (SA) said.

BRW Music enthrals the gathering on Fisheries Day prog



PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ On the occasion of World Fisheries Day, the department of Fisheries A&N Islands with the cooperation of few other departments celebrated the day befittingly at the Corbyn's Cove beach. BRW Music performed for the seafood lovers. Mr. Waahid Shah, alongwith his unit members, Sajid, Wafiya, Pawan&Mannu delighted the gathering. Mr. G. Sudhakar, Secretary Fisheries was the chief guest and appreciated the programme presented by the BRW. Later, Mr. Shah & other members of BRW were felicitated by the Directorate of Fisheries with an award of appreciation.

## On Bihar trip, Aaditya Thackeray meets Nitish and Tejashwi; deflects anti-migrant charge

PATNA, NOV 23/--/ Aaditya Thackeray on Wednesday sought to distance himself from the strident "anti-migrant" stance that the Shiv Sena, founded by his late grandfather Bal Thackeray, has often been accused of.

The Shiva Sena (Uddhav Balasaheb Thackeray) leader and former Maharashtra minister, whose first trip to Bihar intensified the buzz around "opposition unity", claimed that those who have been hostile towards the Hindi-speaking north Indians were now "with the BJP" and asserted that all communities had "co-existed peacefully when we were in power in Maharashtra".

Notably, Thackeray's father Uddhav headed the "Maha Vikas Aghadi" government that also included Sharad Pawar's NCP and the Congress.

He resigned as Chief Minister of Maharashtra earlier this year after which a rebel faction of Shiv Sena headed by Eknath Shinde formed a new government with BJP.

Aaditya Thackeray, accompanied by party Rajya Sabha MPs Anil Desai and Priyanka Chaturvedi, had "goodwill meetings" with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Deputy CM Tejashwi Yadav.

During a brief interaction with the media here, Thackeray lauded Yadav for his "good work" and disclosed that he had been in touch, over phone, with the RJD leader for quite some time though this was the first occasion for them to meet in person. He insisted that there was

"nothing political" about his Bihar visit and when journalists asked whether he expected Yadav to campaign for his party in the municipal polls at Mumbai, he replied "the elections are far away".

He, however, added "I have invited Tejashwi Yadav for a personal tour of Maharashtra. He has invited me to visit Bihar's tourist spots. We both shall be looking forward to each other's trips".

When some of the scribes touched a raw nerve with the query whether "Biharis can now rest assured that they will not be beaten up in your state", Thackeray said "those who indulged in such acts are now with the BJP. It is for them to answer".

"All lived together and in peace when we ruled Maharashtra", asserted the young leader who held a ministerial berth in his father's government. Thackeray spoke with Yadav by his side and both ducked queries like "will Shiv Sena's Hindutva be able to make peace with RJD's secularism".

Yadav, on his part, stated that the need of the hour was to "save the Constitution from the onslaughts of the BJP government at the Centre".

"We all know about the brazen use of money power to topple the government in Maharashtra. The BJP had got emboldened by its success there and tried to do the same in Bihar where it ended up burning its fingers", said the RJD heir apparent.

The allusion was to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U) and alleged attempts to split the party by its former national president RCP Singh who, it is widely believed, enjoyed the BJP's backing. (PTI)

## Defence ministry grants working permission to Odisha for development' of Rasgovindpur airstrip

BHUBANESWAR, NOV 23/--/The Ministry of Defence has granted permission to the Odisha government to work for "development of airstrip" at Rasgovindpur in Mayurbhanj district, an official said on Wednesday. The airstrip, built during the Second World War, has been remained abandoned. The Odisha government has been permitted to "develop the airstrip on defence land measuring 160.35 acres as against a cash compensation of Rs 26.03 crore," the official said.

The cash has to be deposited with the Consolidated Fund of India (CFI) before execution of

working permission, he said.

The ministry also suggested that a separate board of officers should be "convened to ascertain exact location, demarcation of land, its cost and modalities of transfer, and security and safety measures" among others. Union Minister of State for Jal Shakti and Tribal Affairs Bishweswar Tudu thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for granting permission for "development of the airstrip" in his tribal-dominated Mayurbhanj Lok Sabha constituency.

The airstrip belonging to DRDO was included in the Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN) scheme.

The state government, had in February, written a letter to the Defence ministry, seeking a non-objection certificate from the Defence Research and Development Organisation for commencement of commercial flight operations from the airstrip.

The DRDO had, in April, recommended and submitted a proposal to the ministry for granting 'no objection' to Odisha for using the airstrip and working permission to develop a civil enclave there. (PTI)

## State BJP President, VP on tour of Campbell Bay



PORT BLAIR, NOV 23/--/ Mr. Ajoy Bairagi, State BJP President, BJP and Mr. Sanjay Kumar Singh, State BJP Vice President reached Campbell Bay ON Wednesday. On reaching Campbell Bay, both the leaders were accorded warm

welcome by local leaders & general public of Campbell Bay, Nicobar District.

Both the leaders are on visit to Nicobar District from today onwards and will attend various programmes organised by Party workers.



## Ensure you are on voter list to avoid detention under NRC norms, Mamata tells people



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee gestures at a beneficiary during West Bengal government's programme for distribution of land pattas to marginalised families, at Netaji Indoor Stadium on Wednesday —Photo: Shyamal Maitra

**KOLKATA, NOV 23** /--/ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday urged the people of the state to ensure that their names feature on the electoral roll to avoid getting sent to detention camps under the garb of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) implementation.

Mamata was addressing a programme organised by the state government to distribute land 'pattas' (deed) to marginalised families from all districts. "There is an exercise underway to upgrade voter list. Ensure your name is there on the voters' list. If there is a mistake, your name might get omitted from the list and you could be sent to detention camps in the name of

**There is an exercise underway to upgrade voter list. Ensure your name is there on the voters' list. If there is a mistake, your name might get omitted from the list and you could be sent to detention camps in the name of NRC implementation. Such instances have been noted in Assam. NRC is shame, shame and shame**

— Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee

NRC implementation. "Such instances have been noted in Assam. NRC is shame, shame and shame. There is a conspiracy being hatched. Do not waste time and enroll get your name on the voters' list," the chief minister said. Mamata, taking a dig at the BJP-led Centre, also wondered why people who had been exercising their franchise to elect the country's prime minister "need to give proof of citizenship". Referring to incidents of "forcible takeover of land by railway and airport authorities" in the past, the chief minister said, "No eviction will be allowed in Bengal without proper compensation and rehabilitation." She asked people

to stage protests if their lands are forcibly taken and assured them that the state government will be there to lend support to the cause. "Poor people cannot be forcibly evicted from a place. I have heard that people were being evicted from some areas for flyover and highway construction work. We will never allow such use of bulldozers. Do not give up so easily, lodge protests against these drives," Mamata underlined. "We have identified 300 refugee colonies in the state, and its residents will be given land pattas in due course of time," she stated. The chief minister also said that beneficiaries need not furnish Aadhaar card to avail financial aid under her

government's 'Lakshmir Bhandar' scheme. Without taking any name, she claimed that letters were being sent to the Centre alleging that funds are being misuses in West Bengal. "I feel ashamed to take names of those who are writing to the Centre asking it to create an economic blockade in West Bengal. They have alleged that central funds were being misused." Lashing out at the Narendra Modi-led dispensation, she said the central government "runs on the instructions of the party (BJP)". "The (Central) government takes instructions from the party. If the party says that it's night, they (Centre) too nod in agreement," she added. (PTI)

## Inclusion of CJ in consultative process for CEC appointment will ensure independence: SC

**NEW DELHI, NOV 23** /--/ The Supreme Court on Wednesday said the inclusion of the Chief Justice of India in the consultative process for the appointment of Chief Election Commissioner would ensure independence of the poll panel. The apex court was of the view that any ruling party at the Centre "likes to perpetuate itself in power" and can appoint a 'Yes Man' to the post under the current system.

The court was hearing a batch of pleas seeking a collegium-like system for the appointment of Election Commissioners (ECs) and Chief Election Commissioner (CEC). The Centre argued that a 1991 Act ensured the Election Commission remains independent in terms of salary and tenure to its members and there is no "trigger point" which warrants interference from the court. It said that the mechanism adopted for appointment of Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) is seniority among the election

commissioners, who are appointed by convention from secretary or chief secretary level officers of the Centre and state level, respectively. However, a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice KM Joseph said the independence of the institution should be ensured at the threshold for which the appointment should be scanned at the entry level. "Each ruling political party in the Centre likes to perpetuate itself in power. Now, what we want to do is concentrate on the consultative process for the appointment of CEC and the inclusion of the Chief Justice of India in the process would ensure the independence of the commission", the bench also comprising justices Ajay Rastogi, Aniruddha Bose, Hrishikesh Roy and CT Ravi Kumar said. Attorney General R Venkataramani, appearing for the Centre pointed out that the Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election

Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991 was a watershed moment that ensured independence in salary and tenure to the ECs. "The law was passed by the Parliament after the report from the Dinesh Goswami committee. So, it cannot be said that there was no application of mind. The law provides and ensures that the commission remains independent in terms of salary and tenure of its members which are intrinsic features for the independence of an institution", he said. The bench told Venkataramani that the 1991 law he is referring to only deals with terms of a service condition which is evident from its very name. "Suppose the government appoints a 'Yes Man', who has the same philosophy and is like-minded. The law provides him all the immunity in tenure and salary, then there is no so-called independence in the institution. This is an election commission, where independence should be ensured at the threshold", the bench said. (PTI)

## CV Ananda Bose takes oath as West Bengal Guv

**Adhikari skips ceremony over seat allocation, TMC says he set bad precedent**



C V Ananda Bose signing the oath register after being administered oath of office as Governor of West Bengal, at Raj Bhawan on Wednesday— Photo: EOI

**KOLKATA, NOV 23** /--/ CV Ananda Bose on Wednesday took oath as the new governor of West Bengal. Bose was administered the oath of office by Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court Prakash Shrivastava in the presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Speaker Biman Banerjee at a programme in Raj Bhavan. Leader of Opposition in state assembly Suwendu Adhikari, however, skipped the programme. Bose, a retired Kerala cadre IAS officer of the 1977 batch, was named the new governor of West Bengal on November 17. He replaced La Ganesan as the state's constitutional head. Bose, the 22nd Governor of the state, had served as an administrator of the National Museum in Kolkata before superannuation in 2011. He had started his work life as a probationary officer in State Bank of India in Kolkata. Among others who attended the ceremony were city mayor Firhad Hakim, state minister Chandrima Bhattacharya and other dignitaries. The new Governor's wife, son and other family members were also present at the event. Mamata, following the swearing-in, offered rosogollas (sweetmeat) to Bose. Adhikari, who gave the ceremony a miss, told reporters in the Assembly that the TMC government "humiliated" him by allotting him a seat beside two MLAs who defected to the ruling party from the BJP after last year's Assembly polls. "Just to humiliate me and

the BJP at the oath-taking ceremony, I was given a seat beside two legislators who had won last year's elections on a BJP ticket and later defected to the TMC without resigning as saffron party MLA. "This TMC government is acting in a vindictive manner. It is yet to digest the fact that the TMC supremo lost to me in Nandigram seat. The government did not follow decorum and showed disrespect to the chair of Leader of Opposition. Hence, I skipped the programme," Adhikari told reporters. The Leader of Opposition further pointed out that TMC MPs Sudip Bandyopadhyay and Mala Roy were given front row seats at the event, while BJP's Balurghat MP and state president Sukanta Majumdar was assigned a rear row seat. "Mamata Banerjee had the opportunity to show grace and poise and be accommodating to the Opposition for an occasion like the swearing-in ceremony of the Honourable Governor. She failed to do so," he added. Responding to Adhikari's charges, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said the BJP leader skipped the programme on "flimsy grounds". "Adhikari is no saint who can make tall claims about courtesy. We are aware of the kind of language he uses against our chief minister every day. He was given due respect and recognition as the Leader of Opposition at the swearing-in ceremony. He set a bad precedent by skipping the programme," Ghosh added. (PTI)

### Japan Stun 4-time champions Germany 2-1

**DOHA, NOV 23** /--/ In what was unarguably the second-biggest upset of the 2022 Qatar World Cup, Japan stunned 4-time world champions Germany in a Group E match on Wednesday. Germany had taken the lead early in the first-half, thanks to an Ilkay Gundogan penalty. In the second-half, however, Japan upped the temp and scored two goals to bag a historic win. (Details on sport page)

### Cong's steering panel to discuss plenary meet, strategy for winter session of Parliament

**NEW DELHI, NOV 23** /--/ The Congress is likely to finalise its strategy for the Winter Session of Parliament and the dates for its plenary session at the first meeting of its steering committee headed by party chief Mallikarjun Kharge on December 4. Sources said this would be the first meeting of the Congress steering committee, which was formed in place of the working committee, the highest decision-making body of the party, after Kharge took charge as the new chief last month. During the all-important meeting, discussions on the party's strategy going forward would be held and preparations for the "Bharat Jodo Yatra", which enters the Hindi heartland states, would also be deliberated upon, the sources said. Several organisational matters would also be taken up for discussion during the meeting, they added. All members of the CWC were made part of the steering committee soon after Kharge assumed charge as the Congress president. Kharge's election as the Congress president will be ratified at the party's plenary session, which is likely to be held in March next year, and the dates for it could be finalised during the meeting. (PTI)



Japan players celebrate taking the lead against Germany

## Bengal CM voices anguish over violence on Meghalaya-Assam border

**KOLKATA, NOV 23** /--/ Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday expressed anguish over the violence at a disputed Assam-Meghalaya border location that killed six people a day before and prayed for peace there.

Six people, including a forest guard, were killed in the violence in the early hours of Tuesday after a truck allegedly laden with illegally felled timber was intercepted by forest personnel from Assam. "I am gravely anguished by the tragic instance of firing at Mukroh, Meghalaya that claimed lives of 6 people. I express my heartfelt condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in this conflict. I earnestly pray that peace and calm prevails for the greater good," Mamata said on Twitter. Notably, Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Tuesday alleged that the incident showed the 'ineptitude' of the Meghalaya government. Expressing shock over the incident, the TMC MP tweeted: "I am shocked and deeply saddened by the extremely unfortunate firing incident at Mukroh, Meghalaya which took away lives of five innocent civilians and a forest guard from Assam."

"For how long will CM @SangmaConrad allow @himantabiswa to take Meghalaya for granted? For how long should Meghalayans live in fear and

insecurity. For how long will this injustice go on," Banerjee, the nephew of the West Bengal chief minister, said. Taking a dig at the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government, Banerjee on November 22 said, "Today's incident exposes the ineptitude of the MDA Govt, failing its own people." Senior TMC leader and former Meghalaya chief minister Mukul Sangma visited the survivors of the Mukroh firing incident at the Jowai Civil Hospital and the kin of the deceased, assuring them of full support, the party said in another tweet. In a tweet tagging Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah and Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, Meghalaya CM Conrad K Sangma, whose party is an ally of the BJP, complained that the Assam Police and forest guards "entered Meghalaya and resorted to unprovoked firing". Assam Police officials, however, asserted that the truck was intercepted in West Karbi Anglong district of the state by a forest department team and a mob from the Meghalaya side had later attacked the forest guards and policemen, which led to firing by the Assam side to control the situation. Five of the six killed in the violence were Meghalaya residents and one was an Assam forest guard, Conrad Sangma said. (PTI)

## Shah targets Rahul, says Medha Patkar's presence in Yatra biggest insult to Gujarat

**AHMEDABAD, NOV 23** /--/ Union home minister and BJP MP Amit Shah on Wednesday said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's gesture of taking along anti-Narmada activist Medha Patkar during his Bharat Jodo Yatra is the "biggest insult" meted out to Gujarat's people by the Opposition party.

Shah was addressing a poll rally in Jasdan town in Rajkot district in support of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Kunvarji Bavalia for the next month's Gujarat Assembly elections. Voting on Jasdan and 88 other seats will be held on December 1 in the first phase of the two-phase polls. "Medha Patkar, who had stalled the Narmada dam project through litigation, is now walking with Congress' prince Rahul Gandhi. The party owes an answer to the people. This is akin to sprinkling salt on the wounds of the people of Gujarat," the Gandhinagar MP said.

The official handle of Bharat Jodo' had tweeted a photo of Patkar with Gandhi when the Yatra was in Maharashtra, along with a caption, "When you do something for the society, people involved in social welfare themselves join you Social activist Medha Patkar participated in Bharat Jodo

Yatra". "Rahul Gandhi chose to take along a person who had deprived Gujarat of getting the Narmada water for 20 years. This is the biggest insult meted out to Gujarat by the Opposition party," said Shah. He also slammed Delhi chief minister and Aam Aadmi Party leader Arvind Kejriwal



for giving a ticket to Patkar in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections from the North East Mumbai constituency.

"But, he (Kejriwal) is smart. He understands this is not the right time to bring her to Gujarat ahead of the elections. But, ask AAP leaders the reason for giving her the ticket," Shah told the rally. The home minister credited the BJP government

for ending water scarcity in the Rajkot region of Gujarat and accused Congress of delaying the Sardar Sarovar dam project. "The foundation stone of Sardar Sarovar dam was laid by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1963, one year before my birth. The water finally reached here

when I turned 58. So who stalled the Narmada project? The Congress party had stalled this project from 1963 till 2002," he alleged. Shah said Prime Minister Narendra Modi had sat on an indefinite hunger strike when he was chief minister of Gujarat against the Congress-led UPA government's decision to not increase the height of the dam. (PTI)

## Local contractors deployed ...

From page-1

The working contractor has defaulted on progress of works due to certain reasons. The provisions of contract to declare them Non-Performer and Cure Notice prior to termination has already been issued. However, the other provisions of the contract on failure or non-performance have also been invoked to carry out minimum inescapable works of maintaining mobility and its traffic worthiness against the contractors Risk & Cost. NHIDCL further clarified that local contractors have been deployed to proceed with the maintenance works like filling of major potholes and attending to very bad stretches immediately. A large-scale repair/maintenance work is also in the pipe line and soon the local contractors working on these stretches. NHIDCL is already on the task to explore all means to proceed with the assigned work difficult working conditions where availability of working season is very small and adverse climatic conditions are playing a detrimental role in execution of road works, clarified NHIDCL.

## Yuvajaya Foundation to conduct ....

From page-1

Career Connect is a unique program that bridges the gap between academics and industry requirements, & facilitates the holistic development of skills and attitudes in students. The goal of the curriculum is to build confidence in students such that they have the requisite knowledge, skills, and mindset to start a career in the corporate sector.



## Search effort intensifies after Indonesia quake killed 271

CIANJUR, NOV 23 /--/ More rescuers and volunteers were deployed on Wednesday in devastated areas on Indonesia's main island of Java to search for the dead and missing from an earthquake that killed at least 271 people. With many missing, some remote areas still unreachable and more than 2,000 people injured in the 5.6 magnitude quake on Monday, the death toll was likely to rise. Hospitals near the epicentre on the densely populated island were already overwhelmed, and patients hooked up to IV drips lay on stretchers and cots in tents set up outside, awaiting further treatment. More than 12,000 army personnel were deployed on Wednesday to increase the strength of search efforts that being carried out by more than 2,000 joint forces of police, the search and rescue agency and volunteers, said Suharyanto, the National Disaster Mitigation Agency chief. Suharyanto, who like many Indonesians uses only one name, said aid was reaching thousands of people left homeless who fled to temporary shelters where supplies can be distributed only by foot over the rough terrain. He said rescuers recovered three bodies Wednesday and rescued a 6-year-old boy who was found alive next to the dead body of his grandmother after spending two days trapped under the rubble of his collapsed house. Television reports showed police, soldiers and other rescue personnel using jackhammers, circular saws and sometimes their bare hands and farm tools, digging desperately in the worst-hit area of Cijendil village where tons of mud, rocks and trees were left from a landslide. The government appeared to be focused on finding bodies, and wherever possible, survivors. Authorities struggled to bring tractors and other heavy equipment over washed-out roads after earthquake triggered landslides crashing onto the hilly

hamlets. But still, residents said the government was slow to respond to the earthquake.

Muhammad Tohir, 48, was sitting in his living room with family in Cijendil when the catastrophe struck. Although his family managed to make it out, his sister and her two children was crushed by a landslide, a few kilometres (miles) of his house. "When I came to my sister's house, I was devastated by what I saw," Tohir said. "Dozens of houses had been buried by landslides. I feel like doomsday." He said more than 40 houses in his sister's neighbourhood in Cijendil were buried under tons of mud with at least 45 people were buried alive, including Tohir's sister and her two children. Tohir, along with other residents in the area, searched for the missing using farm tools and managed to pull out two bodies buried under as much as 6 metres (10 feet) of mud. Two days later, rescue personnel arrived to help in the search. "The government too slow to respond to this disaster," Tohir said. "They should be bringing in heavy equipment to speed this up," he said. But he said that he will not give up until they can pull his sister and his nieces out of the mud.

In several hard-hit areas, water, food and medical supplies were being distributed from trucks, and authorities have deployed military personnel carrying food, medicine, blankets, field tents and water tankers. Volunteers and rescue personnel erected more temporary shelters for those left homeless in several villages of Cianjur district. About 800 police, soldiers and volunteers dug through the debris with their bare hands, shovels and hoes as heavy rain hindered their efforts. Arif Yulianto, a search and rescue operation coordinator said the search effort was halted Wednesday afternoon due to heavy rains that made the landslide areas unstable. The operation is to be resumed early Thursday. (AP)

## Lankan Prez rules out early elections, vows to crush anti-government street protests



COLOMBO, NOV 23 /--/ Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday rejected the opposition's demand for early parliamentary elections and vowed to use the military to crush any future anti-government protests aimed at regime change.

Wickremesinghe, 73, who took over as the President of Sri Lanka in July this year after then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa fled Colombo in the face of the country's worst economic crisis since 1948, said that he will not dissolve the parliament until the economic crisis is resolved. "I will not dissolve parliament early until the economic crisis can be resolved," he said while speaking in Parliament. Wickremesinghe has a mandate to serve out the rest of Rajapaksa's term, which ends in November 2024. However, the opposition parties are demanding early

parliamentary elections, claiming that Wickremesinghe's government lacks electoral credibility. The next presidential election is scheduled to be held in 2024. Sri Lanka has witnessed its worst economic crisis since early this year, with running out of reserves to pay for imports. The country experienced long queues for fuel, and cooking gas while all essential supplies ran dry.

In mid-April, the country declared its first-ever sovereign debt default before approaching the International Monetary Fund for a bailout facility. The island nation survived with essential supplies being made available through dedicated Indian credit lines. The Indian assistance was worth 4 billion dollars to help Sri Lanka tide over the economic crisis in the first half of the year. Widespread

unrest over the government's handling of the economic crisis turned into a political crisis. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets for months-long protests and ousted the former president Gotabaya Rajapaksa in mid-July. Wickremesinghe succeeded him after Rajapaksa had fled the country and ordered the military to crackdown on protesters who had occupied government buildings.

On Wednesday, Wickremesinghe said that even if the protesters call him a "dictator" they would need to obtain police permission to stage street protests. "They can call me a dictator but must obtain police permission to stage street protests and cause road traffic. There is a plan to stage another Aragalaya (mass public protest) to oust the government. I will not allow that. I will put the military and use emergency laws to stop them if they try it again," Wickremesinghe said. Wickremesinghe faced criticism for ordering the crackdown and detaining at least two protesters under the draconian Prevention of Terrorism Act. Wickremesinghe said a radical political party named Frontline Socialist Party was behind in organising street protests to achieve their political aims. (PTI)

## Supreme Court OKs handover of Trump tax returns to Congress

WASHINGTON, NOV 23 /--/ The Supreme Court on Tuesday cleared the way for the imminent handover of former President Donald Trump's tax returns to a congressional committee after a three-year legal fight.

The court, with no noted dissents, rejected Trump's plea for an order that would have prevented the Treasury Department from giving six years of tax returns for Trump and some of his businesses to the Democratic-controlled House Ways and Means Committee. Alone among recent presidents, Trump refused to release his tax returns either during his successful 2016 campaign or during his four years in the White House, citing what he said was an ongoing audit by the IRS. Last week, Trump announced he would run again in 2024. It was the former president's second loss at the Supreme Court in as many months, and the third this year. In October, the court refused to step into the legal fight surrounding the FBI search of Trump's Florida estate that turned up classified documents. In January, the court refused to stop the National

Archives from turning over documents to the House committee investigating the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol. Justice Clarence Thomas was the only vote in Trump's favour.

In the dispute over his tax returns, the Treasury Department had refused to provide the records during Trump's presidency. But the Biden administration said federal law is clear that the committee has the right to examine any taxpayer's return, including the president's. Lower courts agreed that the committee has broad authority to obtain tax returns and rejected Trump's claims that it was overstepping and only wanted the documents so they could be made public. Chief Justice John Roberts imposed a temporary freeze on November 1 to allow the court to weigh the legal issues raised by Trump's lawyers and the counterarguments of the

administration and the House of Representatives. Just over three weeks later, the court lifted Roberts' order without comment. Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., the committee chairman until the next Congress begins in January, said in a statement that his committee "will now conduct the oversight that we've sought for the last three and a half years."

In a message on his social media networks, Trump said the Supreme Court's action created "terrible precedent for future Presidents." He accused the court of becoming "nothing more than a political body, with our country paying the price." He also said: "Why would anybody be surprised that the Supreme Court has ruled against me, they always do!" The House contended an order preventing the IRS from providing the tax returns would leave lawmakers "little or no time



to complete their legislative work during this Congress, which is quickly approaching its end." Had Trump persuaded the nation's highest court to intervene, he could have run out the clock on the committee, with Republicans ready to take control of the House in January. They almost certainly would have dropped the records request if the issue had not been resolved by then.

The House Ways and Means panel first requested Trump's tax returns in 2019 as part of an investigation into the Internal Revenue Service's audit programme and tax law compliance by the former president. Federal law says the Internal Revenue Service "shall furnish" the returns of any taxpayer to a handful of top lawmakers.

The Justice Department under the Trump administration had defended a decision by then-Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to withhold tax returns from Congress. Mnuchin argued that he could withhold the documents because he concluded they were being sought by Democrats for partisan reasons. (AP)

# Strike on Ukrainian maternity hospital kills 2-day-old baby

KYIV, NOV 23 /--/ An overnight rocket attack destroyed a hospital maternity ward in southern Ukraine, killing a 2-day-old baby, Ukrainian authorities said on Wednesday.

Ukraine's first lady said the attack caused "horrible pain," vowing that "we will never forget and never forgive." The baby's mother and a doctor were pulled alive from the rubble in Vilniansk, close to the city of Zaporizhzhia. The region's governor said the rockets were Russian. The strike adds to the gruesome toll suffered by hospitals and other medical facilities and their patients and staff in the Russian invasion that will enter its tenth month this week. They have been in the firing line from the outset, including a March 9 airstrike that destroyed a maternity hospital in the now-occupied port city of Mariupol. "At night, Russian monsters launched huge rockets at the small maternity ward of the hospital in Vilniansk. Grief overwhelms our hearts a baby was killed who had just seen the light of day. Rescuers are working at the site," said the regional governor, Oleksandr Starukh, writing on the Telegram messaging app.

First lady Olena Zelenska wrote on Twitter that a 2-day-old boy died in the strike and expressed her condolences. "Horrible pain. We will never forget and never forgive,"



Rescuers work at the site of a maternity ward of a hospital destroyed by a Russian missile attack, as their attack on Ukraine continues, in Vilniansk, Zaporizhzhia region, Ukraine

she said. Photos posted by the governor showed thick smoke rising above mounds of rubble, being combed by emergency workers against the backdrop of a dark night sky.

The State Emergency Service said the two-story building was destroyed. Vilniansk is in the Ukrainian-held north of the Zaporizhzhia region, and is about 500 kilometres (300 miles) southeast of Ukraine's capital, Kyiv. Other parts of Zaporizhzhia are Russian-held and it is one of four Ukrainian regions that Russia illegally annexed in September after internationally condemned sham referendums.

Medical workers' efforts have

been complicated by unrelenting Russian attacks in recent weeks on Ukraine's infrastructure that officials say have caused huge damage to the power grid. State grid operator Ukrenergo said that all regions of Ukraine would see power outages on Wednesday. The situation is even worse in the southern city of Kherson, from which Russia retreated nearly two weeks ago after months of occupation cutting power and water lines. Many doctors in the city are working in the dark, unable to use elevators to transport patients to surgery and operating with headlamps, cell phones and flashlights.

In some hospitals, key

## Pak defence minister says new Army Chief to be appointed before PM Sharif's Turkey visit

ISLAMABAD, NOV 23 /--/ Pakistan's defence minister Khawaja Asif Wednesday said he expected the new army chief to be appointed before Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Turkey on Friday, hours after the premier's office announced that it has received the names of six top generals for the coveted post.

Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, 61, is scheduled to retire on November 29 after a three-year extension. He has ruled out seeking another extension. "The prime minister will leave the day after tomorrow in the evening. So it (the appointment of new army chief) will be settled before then," Asif said. The Prime Minister's Office (PMO) will send the summary to President Arif Alvi who will notify the appointments of the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and the Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee (CJCSC). Prime Minister Sharif was scheduled to leave for Ankara on a two-day visit on Friday at the invitation of Turkish President Reccip Tayyip Erdogan.

Earlier, the PMO issued a brief statement on Twitter announcing that it has received the summary from the Ministry of Defence for the appointments of the COAS and CJCSC. "The prime minister will take a decision on the appointments as per the laid down procedure," according to the statement. The Army also confirmed that it had sent the names of six top lieutenant generals for the appointments. Although it did not mention the names, but it is believed that the six men include Lt Gen Asim Munir (currently Quarter Master General), Lt Gen Sahir Shamshad Mirza (Commander 10 Corps), Lt Gen Azhar Abbas (Chief of General Staff), Lt Gen Nauman Mehmood (National Defence University Presi dent), Lt Gen Faiz Hamid (Commander Baha walpur Corps), and Lt Gen Mohammad Amir (Com mander Gujranwala Corps). Two of them would be picked by Prime Minister Sharif for promotion and appointment for the posts of COAS and CJCSC before November 29.

Talking to reporters later, Asif said that the formalities, the procedure laid down in the law will likely take a day and reiterated that the matter would be decided once the formalities were completed. When asked whether the new army chief would be the

equipment no longer works. "Breathing machines don't work, X-ray machines don't work ... There is only one portable ultrasound machine and we carry it constantly," said Volodymyr Malishchuk, the head of surgery at a children's hospital in the city.

On Tuesday, after strikes on Kherson seriously wounded 13-year-old Artur Voblikov, a team of health staff carefully maneuvered the sedated boy up six flights of a narrow staircase to an operating room to amputate his left arm. Malishchuk said that three children wounded by Russian strikes have come to the hospital this week, half as many as had previously been admitted in all of the nine months since the invasion began.

Picking up a piece of shrapnel that was found in a 14-year-old boy's stomach, he said children are arriving with severe head injuries and ruptured internal organs. Artur's mother, Natalia Voblikova, sat in the dark hospital with her daughter, waiting for his surgery to end. "You can't even call (Russians) animals, because animals take care of their own," said Voblikova wiping tears from her eyes. "But the children ... Why kill children?" In the northeastern city of Kupiansk, two civilians were killed and two more were wounded by Russian shelling on Wednesday morning, a regional official said. (AP)

senior-most candidate, he said, "I don't know. You can ask someone else [but] I don't know." To another question about the discussion of the appointments in the cabinet, the minister said that he was "not aware" of this because the appointment was a "technical" issue. He also said that the cabinet would be taken into confidence if a meeting was convened. He said that the prime minister would also take the coalition government

into confidence about the appointments during a meeting scheduled later Wednesday. Asif rejected the media reports that a summary was received by the government containing four names on which objections were raised. "That is incorrect," he said. The minister urged the media to avoid unnecessary speculation. "The media has been representing vested interests. I think the media shouldn't be partisan," he said. To a question about the possibility of Imran Khan calling off his long march protest after the appointment of the army chief, the minister refused to speculate about it but acknowledged the prevailing uncertainty which he stressed would end once the issue of appointment was settled. "I don't want to speculate but the uncertainty prevailing over the past few months will end once the issue is settled in one or two days," he said.

His remarks came as the clouds of uncertainty around the appointment of the new army chief began to lift after the government announced that it finally received names of senior generals for top selections. The CJCSC is the highest authority in the hierarchy of the armed forces but the key powers including mobilisation of troops, appointments and transfers lie with the COAS which makes the person holding the post the most powerful in the military. The powerful Army, which has ruled Pakistan for more than half of its 75-plus years of existence, has hitherto wielded considerable power in matters of security and foreign policy. The recommendation of the Prime Minister is binding on the President but the latter can delay the appointment for some time. Some media reports showed that the President can hold the summary for the appointment for 25 days.

However, the government official rejected the reports that the president could delay the appointment. (PTI)



Khawaja Asif

## One person dead, 21 injured after 2 explosions rock Jerusalem

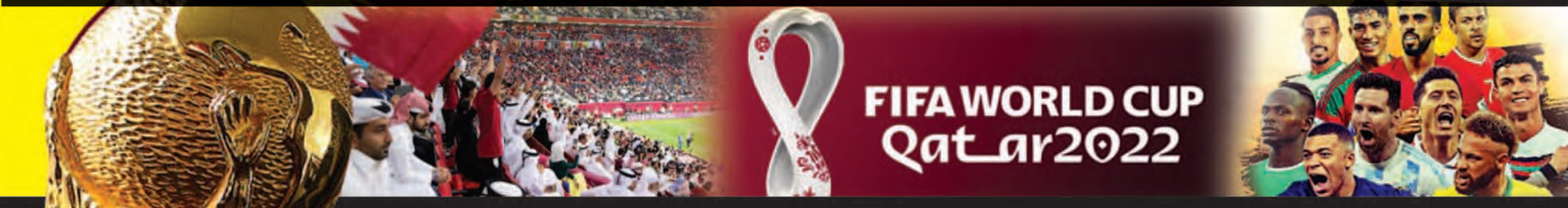
JERUSALEM, NOV 23 /--/

One person was killed and 21 others injured in two separate explosions at bus stops at the entrances to Jerusalem on Wednesday, in what seemed like a coordinated terror attack, Israeli police and rescue officials said. The first explosion occurred close to the main entrance of Jerusalem in Givat Shaul, shortly after 7 AM when people were on their way to their offices and students to their educational

institutions. Seventeen people at the bus stop were injured in the blast, including two critically and two seriously, medical officials said. One of the victims later died at Shaare Zedek Medical Center, hospital officials said. A second blast occurred shortly after at 7:30 AM at Ramot junction, another entrance to Jerusalem, which is normally jam-packed in the morning. Four people were injured in the explosion. The devices were

packed with nails to maximise casualties and controlled by nearly identical remote devices, the police said in its initial response. Israel Police Commissioner Kobi Shabtai said that "this is a framework of attack that we haven't seen for many years". He called on the public to be alert for suspicious packages and said officers were scanning the city for other possible devices. It seemed like a coordinated terror attack, he said. (PTI)





# JAPAN STUN WASTEFUL GERMANY



DOHA, NOV 23/--/ Japan stunned Germany their World Cup opener on Wednesday, punishing the four-time champions for taking their chances after they dominated the first half. The German team covered their mouths for the team photo before the match in a powerful protest against FIFA's decision to rainbow-themed armbands. Hansi Flick's team came to Qatar under huge pressure to avoid the disaster of 2018, when they failed to make it out the group stage in Russia as holders. They took the lead through a first-half penalty from Ilkay Gundogan and should have been out of sight after creating a host of chances. But Japan hung on and equalised through substitute Ritsu Doan in the 75th minute. Takuma Asano then completed a remarkable turnaround eight minutes later, smashing the ball home to send the boisterous Japanese fans wild. Germany's World Cup future is now on the line, with games to come in Group E against Spain and Costa Rica. Japan are eyeing a place in the knockout round after a dramatic comeback that scarcely looked possible at the end of the first half. The Blue Samurai made a positive start, with Daizen Maeda putting the ball in the net as early as the eighth minute only for the linesman to flag for offside. But it was to prove a false dawn for Japan as Antonio Rudiger headed past the

post from a corner, before Joshua Kimmich tested goalkeeper Shuichi Gonda, with Gundogan blasting the rebound over the bar. Gundogan peppered the Japan goal with shots, with Gonda keeping him out before Maya Yoshida threw his body in the way of another effort. Gundogan put the Germans ahead after they were awarded a penalty when Gonda tripped David Raum, coolly slotting his kick down the middle. Jamal Musiala gave a glimpse of his immense talent when he turned and flashed a shot over the bar on the stroke of half-time. There was just enough time for Kai Havertz to put the ball in the net before the interval, only for VAR to rule the goal out for offside. Musiala returned to torment Japan after the break, skipping through the defence before blazing over. The 19-year-old then turned provider, laying the ball off for Gundogan to lash against the post. Japan brought on livewire forwards Asano and Kaoru Mitoma to try to inject some energy into the four-times Asian champions. But Germany kept up their pressure and only a string of last-ditch saves from Gonda prevented Japan from falling further behind. Hiroki Sakai had a golden chance to equalise but blazed wildly over the bar after Manuel Neuer had parried the ball into his path. Doan showed him how it was done just minutes later, converting after Neuer had palmed away Takumi Minamino's effort. Asano then put the Japanese fans in dreamland, racing away into the box before lashing home a shot that Neuer was powerless to stop. Germany threw everyone forward in a desperate search for an equaliser but it was too little to late. (AFP)

## GAME NOTES

### Son able to play in S. Korea's opener against Uruguay after injury, confirms Bento

DOHA, NOV 23 /--/ Son Heung-min will be able to play in South Korea's World Cup opener against Uruguay on Thursday despite wearing a mask after facial surgery, coach Paulo Bento said. The Spurs attacker and South Korean skipper had surgery earlier this month after suffering fractures around his left eye in a collision during a Champions League match. The 30-year-old has been training in Qatar in a mask and South Korean fans have been eagerly waiting on news of his availability. "Son can play and will be able to play," Bento told a pre-match press conference on Wednesday. The Portuguese coach added: "The fact he will be wearing a mask is not inconvenient for him, it is natural for him." (AP)

### Pele congratulates Weah for FIFA World Cup goal against Wales

DOHA, NOV 23 /--/ Brazil great Pele congratulated United States forward Timothy Weah for scoring his debut goal in the World Cup in the Americans' 1-1 draw with Wales. Weah got his goal in the 36th minute of Monday's game to become the first player to score against Wales in a World Cup since Pele, who was 17 years old when he did it in 1958. That was the last time Wales played at the World Cup before this year in Qatar. Weah posted a photo of him celebrating the goal on Instagram and Pele congratulated him in the comments section. "Congratulations. It was a beautiful goal. Keep dreaming, dreams come true," Pele wrote. Weah responded to "Papa Pele" by thanking him for the "inspiring message." "It is such a blessing and an honour to receive such an inspiring message from The King himself," Weah wrote. (AP)

### France defender Lucas Hernandez limps out of the tournament

DOHA, NOV 23 /--/ France defender Lucas Hernandez will miss the rest of the defending champions' World Cup campaign after suffering a knee injury in Tuesday's opening match against Australia, a source close to Les Bleus told AFP. The Bayern Munich defender hobbled off in the holders' 4-1 win over the Socceroos. His absence comes with coach Didier Deschamps already grappling with a host of key players ruled out of the tournament in Qatar. The 2018 champions lost star striker Karim Benzema after the Ballon d'Or winner injured his left thigh in training on Saturday. Also missing are Paul Pogba, N'Golo Kante and Presnel Kimpembe. "Honestly, it's starting to become a big deal," said France captain Hugo Lloris. (AFP)

### Senegal midfielder Cheikhou Kouyate likely to miss Qatar clash due to injury

DOHA, NOV 23 /--/ Senegal midfielder Cheikhou Kouyate is likely to miss the game against host Qatar at the World Cup because of a right hamstring injury, his team said Wednesday. Kouyate was "probably" out of Senegal's second Group A game on Friday, the team said, forcing the African champion to reshuffle its lineup again having already lost forward Sadio Mane to injury days before the tournament started. Kouyate, a key central midfielder for Senegal, went off on a stretcher in the second half of his team's opening 2-0 loss to the Netherlands after he went up for a header and came down clutching his right thigh. Defender Abdou Diallo was also injured and came off against the Netherlands. Senegal said Diallo had muscle cramps but was expected to return to training on Wednesday. This year's African Cup of Nations winner came to the World Cup with high hopes of making an impression but now is in a scrap to qualify for the knockout stage after losing to the Dutch through two late goals. Host Qatar lost 2-0 to Ecuador in the opening game of the World Cup and is also desperate for a win in its second group match. (AP)

# Morocco hold Croatia to a goalless draw

DOHA, NOV 23 /--/ Morocco held Croatia to a 0-0 draw in their opening game of the World Cup on Wednesday, producing a spirited display against the 2018 runners-up led by Luka Modric. Backed by Qatar's large Moroccan community at the Al Bayt Stadium, the Atlas Lions followed up north African rivals Tunisia's strong performance against dark horses Denmark a day earlier to frustrate Croatia. Coach Zlatko Dalic had urged Croatia to

exercise caution following Saudi Arabia's shock win over Argentina, a result Morocco captain Romain Saiss said had "opened the door" for the tournament's less-fancied teams. Morocco took the game to a Croatia side featuring four players who started the 2018 final but struggled to create genuine chances against a defence marshalled by the experienced Dejan Lovren. Azzedine Ounahi strangely opted against shooting when well placed inside the area, with Hakim Ziyech and Achraf Hakimi heavily involved down the right without exerting undue pressure on Croatia. Ivan Perisic fired just over from distance for Croatia after intercepting a dreadful pass from Selim Amallah, while goalkeeper Yassine Bounou blocked well with his legs to deny Nikola Vlasic from close range. Modric, the former Ballon



Croatia and Morocco could not breakthrough in front of goal

d'Or winner appearing at his fourth World Cup at the age of 37, then hammered over from the edge of the box. Morocco lost Noussair Mazraoui early in the second half after his diving header was saved, the Bayern Munich full-back injuring himself when he tumbled awkwardly to the ground. Sofyan Amrabat poked Lovren's goal-bound effort away off the line after a scramble at a corner, while Hakimi's free-kick at the other end was beaten to safety by Croatian keeper Dominik Livakovic. Only once have Morocco gone beyond the group stage, in 1986, but they will rate their chances of advancing with games to come against an ageing Belgium team and Group F outsiders Canada. Croatia pushed for a late winner but found Morocco's defence in unforgiving mood as Walid Regragui's side secured a valuable and deserved point. (AFP)

**TODAY'S MATCH**  
**Group G:** Switzerland vs Cameroon - 3:30 PM IST  
**Group H:** Uruguay vs South Korea - 6:30 PM IST  
**Group H:** Portugal vs Ghana - 9:30 PM IST  
**Group G:** Brazil vs Serbia - 12:30 AM IST